

Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grant Program

Request for Applications

Application form available on the DATCP website:

https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NMFEGrants.aspx

Deadline: April 15, 2016.

Electronic submissions only to:

Rachel Rushmann at rachel.rushmann@wi.gov

Questions about this application?

Rachel Rushmann, DATCP NMFE Program Coordinator: 608-224-4622, rachel.rushmann@wi.gov

Mark Jenks, DATCP: 608-224-4507, mark.jenks@wi.gov

The administration of the Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) Grant Program is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) through the Soil and Water Resource Management program to provide support for nutrient management planning in Wisconsin. Through this grant process, the NMFE grant program provides awards to entities to conduct farmer nutrient management training courses that enable farmers to become qualified to write their own nutrient management plans for their farms to meet program requirements or farm management goals. The amount of available funds will determine the number and extent of grants awarded in each year.

All grants are provided on a reimbursement basis. All award recipients must sign a grant contract with DATCP to receive reimbursements. Funding must be spent in the year in which it is awarded; however, awards may be extended for an additional year if the requirements of the grant contract is for one year period.

Application Deadline and Award Notification

Applications must be received electronically by **Friday, April 15, 2016**. Award amounts granted for 2017 projects will be communicated after the 2017 Joint Final Allocation Plan is approved by DATCP, DNR, and the Land and Water Conservation Board (LWCB). This is likely to occur in late 2016.

Who Can Apply?

Applicants may include, but are not limited to: conservation districts, county, state and federal agriculture or natural resource agencies, colleges, universities, UW-Extension, nonprofit organizations, lake organizations and other organizations focused on agricultural resource management. Producer led groups are eligible to apply if they meet all of the 'Required Project Elements' criteria, detailed in that section below. Applications from multiple entities are encouraged, but one entity must be designated as the grant recipient and project manager. A project manager may submit multiple proposals, but, in the case that grant requests exceed program funds, only one proposal per project manager will receive funding.

Available Funding

DATCP will make grant awards in this category from the appropriation available for this purpose, subject to any lapses and reductions, and reduced by funds set aside by DATCP for nutrient management cost-sharing, producer led watershed groups and other cooperator activities. While DATCP is not projecting the amount of funding it will have to make awards in this category, it will attempt to meet all requests for funding.

Project Tiers and Maximum Awards

The Nutrient Management Farmer Education Program will offer two funding tiers:

1. \$20,000 maximum award for Tier 1
2. \$2,500 maximum award for Tier 2

Please note: separate applications must be submitted if an applicant is applying for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 funding.

All grants are provided on a reimbursement basis. All award recipients must sign a grant contract with DATCP to receive reimbursements. Funding must be spent in the year in which it is awarded; however, awards may be extended for an additional year if the requirements of the grant contract is for one year period.

Tier 1 Project Proposals

Tier 1 projects offer incentive payments to farmer participants for soil testing and associated costs to develop and complete their own nutrient management plan.

Required Project Elements. Applicants must commit to perform all of the following activities, as evidenced in their grant application:

1. Conduct nutrient management educational workshops for participating farmers which include nutrient management principles and planning concepts and elements of the University of Wisconsin – Extension Nutrient Management Farmer Training Curriculum (available on CD).
2. Assist every participating farmer in obtaining updated soil test results. (Required only if prior tests are more than 3 years old).
3. Offer a manure spreader calibration, or other reliable method to determine manure application rate, for every participating farm that utilizes manure.
4. Complete a NRCS 590 nutrient management plan with each farmer including soil and nutrient application restriction maps, and submit signed NM Checklists to the DATCP NMFE program coordinator.
5. Provide on-farm visits with the farmers who attend nutrient management workshops. The visits should help provide participants with individual help they need to understand various components of nutrient management planning, as pertinent to each specific farming operation.
6. Have participating farmers complete both pre- and post-workshop questionnaires. Template questionnaires are provided to project grant recipients on the new NMFE webpage.

Eligible Costs. As part of the budget submission, applicants may request funding to cover any of the following eligible costs:

1. Training participant payments limited to:
 - a. Soil sample collection and testing for each participant who prepares nutrient management plan, not to exceed \$750 per participant, and
 - b. One of the following:
 - i. Incentive stipends to participants not to exceed \$500 per participant, or
 - ii. Tuition vouchers to participants for attending nutrient management training, instruction or classes and cannot exceed \$500 per participant.

2. Payments for persons performing administration or training services not to exceed \$4,000 and limited to:
 - a. Subcontractor fees, and employee salary and fringe benefits for persons who administer or provide training required under this grant. Funds provided to counties must be used for planning, delivery and evaluation of nutrient management training as defined under the terms of this grant, and not for the support of local land conservation personnel to fund any activities under Stats. s. 92.14 (3) (a) through (f).
Note: Projects cannot request reimbursement for professional or administrative salary/fringe charges when participants that receive NM training are charged a tuition fee.
3. Support costs are not to exceed 10 percent of the grant award and are limited to the following unless otherwise approved by the DATCP NMFE program coordinator:
 - a. Mileage per allowable state rates. (Funds may not be used to lease or purchase a vehicle).
 - b. Facility rentals, meals and expenses directly related to holding training sessions.
 - c. Equipment leased or purchased to carry out nutrient management training such as soil probes, hand held GPS, wireless hotspots to complete training, scales to calibrate manure spreaders, etc.
 - d. Information and education materials, training supplies, computer supplies including memory sticks, maps and plats, photocopying, printing and postage.

In-kind and Other Support. Applicants must make a reasonable effort to provide in-kind and direct support and list their contributions in the application. Applicants should also use measures to reduce costs including the use of electronic media and communication in lieu of printing and mailing materials.

***Note:** Payments to participants or reimbursements for items such as soil testing should not be made until the participant completes a nutrient management plan that meets the 590 standard and a nutrient management checklist. Approval for any changes to the above list that are approved by the DATCP NMFE program coordinator will be in writing and should be requested before expenses are incurred.

Tier 2 Project Proposals

Tier 2 projects educate farmers about soil testing and nutrient management planning principles and practices without offering participant stipends. This tier is geared toward, but not limited to:

- Projects that are only seeking support for conducting nutrient management education activities, and are not necessarily designed to result in the completion of a NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Plan.
- New projects/applicants who have not previously conducted Nutrient Management Farmer Education training programs.
- Projects that have secured other sources of funding for soil testing, etc.
- Projects that are not providing incentive payments to farmer participants.

Required Project Elements. Applicants for Tier 2 funding must commit to perform all of the following, as evidenced in their grant application:

1. Provide individualized maps showing soil types and nutrient application restrictions for participating farmers.
2. Conduct educational workshops for participating farmers (approximately six hours of instruction) which includes elements of the University of Wisconsin – Extension Nutrient Management Farmer Education Program Curriculum (available on CD).
3. Conduct a manure spreader calibration for every participating farm that utilizes manure.

Eligible Costs. As part of the budget submission, applicants may request funding to cover any of the following eligible costs:

1. Payments for persons performing administration or training services not to exceed \$750 and limited to:
 - a. Subcontractor fees, and employee salary and fringe benefits for persons who administer or provide training required under this Agreement except that funds provided to counties must be used for planning, delivery and evaluation of nutrient management training as defined under the terms of this Agreement, and not for the support of local land conservation personnel to fund any activities under s. 92.14 (3) (a) through (f) b.

Note: Projects cannot request reimbursement for professional or administrative salary/fringe charges when participants that receive NM training are charged a tuition fee.

2. Support costs limited to:
 - a. Mileage per allowable state rates. (Funds may not be used to lease or purchase a vehicle.)
 - b. Facility rentals, meals and expenses directly related to holding training sessions.
 - c. Equipment leased or purchased to carry out nutrient management training such as soil probes, hand held GPS, scales to calibrate manure spreaders, etc.

- d. Information and education materials, training supplies, computer supplies including memory sticks, maps, photocopying, printing and postage.

In-kind and Other Support. Applicants must make a reasonable effort to provide in-kind and direct support and list their contributions in the application. Applicants should also use measures to reduce costs including the use of electronic media and communication in lieu of printing and mailing materials.

Reporting Requirements

Funded projects must submit a final project report within 30 days after the funding period has ended, no later than February 15th in the year following the award of funds. Final project reports must include at a minimum:

- Dates and locations of training events
- Number of participants
- Number of 590 compliant nutrient management plans developed or updated
- Matching/in-kind contribution amounts and descriptions
- Total number of acres planned
- Results of the pre-and post-workshop questionnaires
- Narrative summarizing aspects of the training events. Include comments describing what went well, what could use improvement or anecdotal information about your workshops.
- DATCP has prepared a final report template available at:
https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NMFEGrants.aspx

In addition to the reporting requirements above, 590 nutrient management plan checklists completed or updated as part of the NMFE project should be sent to DATCP upon completion of the project.

Submission Guidelines

A complete application includes a cover sheet, application and annual budget request using the form located on the DATCP web site https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NMFEGrants.aspx

Full applications must be electronically submitted to Rachel Rushmann at rachel.rushmann@wi.gov in Word format.

Application Instructions

- **Complete the Cover Page:** Use the Cover Page form provided on the website.
 - Provide a title for your project, limited to 12 words.

- Provide the name of the organization that will take responsibility for the fiscal administration of your project (i.e. pay for grant expenses, fill out reimbursement requests, and receive reimbursement payments).
 - Select a geographic focus area for your project.
 - Describe the primary audience for your project.
 - Develop an abstract for your proposed project.
 - Identify the amount of grant dollars you are requesting.
 - Identify start and end dates for your project.
 - Fill out contact information for the project manager and financial manager. Include information about vendor contact and reimbursement check recipient if different than the financial manager.
- **Complete the Application Form:** Please limit your answers to the space provided and provide additional sheets only when necessary.
 - **Complete the Budget Request Page:** Use the form provided, itemize annual expenses and provide a concise description for each item. Complete this for project year: **2017**.
 - Within the boxes provided on the form, describe expense items you want the NMFE grant to cover within each of the listed categories.
 - Include how much direct or match/in-kind assistance will be used to help pay for expenses in each category.
 - Add up the total grant request and in-kind support from each expense category and list these totals in the spaces provided at the bottom of the form. The amounts you list here must match the amounts you list on the Cover Page.
 - Provide additional explanation/justifications in Section I. of the application, if necessary.
 - **Supporting Material:** Although not required, your application may include letters of support, maps and other information to demonstrate the value of your project. Supporting materials must be scanned and submitted in PDF format along with your application.

Application Processing and Evaluation

Staff and advisors to the NMFE Program will review and score submitted proposals on a competitive basis with amounts subject to funding availability. Additionally, the awards will depend on the quantity and content of the applications received. In making awards, preference will be given to funding Tier 1 projects. Up to 10% of the available funding may be awarded for Tier 2 projects.

Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- The degree to which the project meets the goals of the NMFE Program.

- The degree to which the project includes measurable objectives and an evaluation component.
- The comprehensiveness of the training proposal in terms of reaching farmers with existing nutrient management plans that require updating and farmers who need assistance developing nutrient management plans for the first time.
- The ratio of farmer participants to grant funds requested - Serving more farmers in relation to grant funds requested will be positively considered in the evaluation, **however we encourage your application to identify, as accurately as possible, the number of farmers you anticipate serving so funding can be shared among as many projects as possible.**
- The degree to which the project has already identified interested farmers to participate.
- The degree to which the results of the program will benefit the environment and achieve the goals and priorities of federal and state environmental and agricultural agencies.
- The appropriateness (cost benefit) of the project budget for conducting the proposed program.
- The extent to which the project is supplemented with outside funding or in-kind support. (A 1:1 ratio, or better, of in-kind to awarded funds is recommended).
- For previously awarded applicants, the degree to which you have completed your project goals and reporting requirements.

DATCP will notify grant recipients of the funding awards after the 2017 Joint Final Allocation Plan is approved by the Land and Water Conservation Board.

Applicant's Checklist

- ___ Completed application form, including:
 - ___ Cover page
 - ___ Application
 - ___ Budget page
- ___ Total funding request listed on the bottom of your budget request page matches the amount on your cover page.

